

Item: 9

Education, Leisure and Housing Committee: 7 February 2024.

Transforming Orkney's Cultural Services.

Proposed Establishment of Short-life Working Group.

Report by Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.

1. Purpose of Report

To consider the establishment of a short-life member/officer working group to consider the findings of a consultant-led review into the provision of Council-funded cultural services in Orkney.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to note:

2.1.

That, in March 2023, Bryn Jones Associates were appointed to carry out a full review of the Culture Service.

2.2.

That the objective of the review was to evaluate the potential for reducing costs and increasing income generation across the whole Culture Service and to produce an options appraisal with strategic recommendations for a framework and a risk register to identify the most economically advantageous delivery model for Cultural Services that will inform planning for the next ten years and beyond.

It is recommended:

2.3.

That a short-life member/officer working group, comprising the undernoted core membership, be established to consider the findings of the consultant-led review into the provision of Council-funded cultural services in Orkney:

- Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- Vice Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- 2 Additional Elected Members of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- Service Manager (Leisure and Culture).

- Team Leader (Culture).
- Arts Officer.
- 1 representative from the Collections Teams, Orkney Islands Council.
- 1 representative from the Visitor Services Team, Orkney Islands Council.
- 1 representative from the Pier Arts Centre (Culture Fund Key Client).
- 1 representative from the St Magnus International Festival (Culture Fund Key Client).
- 1 representative from the Orkney Folk Festival (Culture Fund Key Client).
- 1 representative from the Orkney Natural History Society Museum (“Stromness Museum”, Culture Fund Key Client).
- 1 representative from Birsay Heritage Trust (Culture Fund Key Client).
- 1 representative from Museums Galleries Scotland.
- 1 representative from Creative Scotland.
- 1 representative from the Friends of St Magnus.

2.4.

That the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee in September 2024, advising of the outcome of the work of the short-life working group and presenting recommendations for consideration.

3. Background

3.1.

Before COVID-19, a Project Initiation Document proposing the introduction of an admissions charge for St Magnus Cathedral, to generate additional income to support the work of the Culture team and wider services across the Council was approved by the Senior Management Team.

3.2.

The Project Initiation Document was discussed once pandemic restrictions had eased in 2022 and it was agreed that a wider review should be undertaken to evaluate the potential for reducing costs and increasing income generation across the whole Culture Service.

3.3.

A revised Project Initiation Document was developed in April 2022. Following an Invitation to Quote in early 2023, Bryn Jones Associates were appointed to carry out the review in March 2023.

3.4.

Bryn Jones Associates work continued throughout the summer of 2023, and incorporated the following elements:

- Desktop research into the local market and national picture for local authority operated museums.
- Site inspections including both anonymous 'mystery visits' and guided visits.
- An online and physical Visitor Survey.
- Extensive consultations with Council officials, Elected Members and focus groups made up of visitors to Orkney and local residents.

3.5.

Bryn Jones Associates issued its findings in December 2023.

4. Next Steps

4.1.

It is proposed that a short-life member/officer working group be established to consider the findings of the consultant-led review.

4.2.

The proposed short life member/officer working group should comprise the undernoted core membership, who will also consult more widely as and when required:

- Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- Vice Chair, Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- 2 Additional Elected Members of Education, Leisure and Housing Committee.
- Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing.
- Head of Community Learning, Leisure and Housing.
- Service Manager (Leisure and Culture).
- Team Leader (Culture).
- Arts Officer.
- 1 representative from the Collections Teams, Orkney Islands Council.
- 1 representative from the Visitor Services Team, Orkney Islands Council.
- 1 representative from the Pier Arts Centre (Culture Fund Key Client).
- 1 representative from the St Magnus International Festival (Culture Fund Key Client).
- 1 representative from the Orkney Folk Festival (Culture Fund Key Client).
- 1 representative from the Orkney Natural History Society Museum ("Stromness Museum", Culture Fund Key Client).
- 1 representative from Birsay Heritage Trust (Culture Fund Key Client).

- 1 representative from Museums Galleries Scotland.
- 1 representative from Creative Scotland.
- 1 representative from the Friends of St Magnus.

4.3.

It is anticipated that the short life working group will conclude its business by mid-July 2024.

4.4.

Thereafter, the Corporate Director for Education, Leisure and Housing should submit a report, to the Education, Leisure and Housing Committee on 11 September 2024, advising of the outcome of the work of the short-life working group and presenting recommendations for consideration.

5. Corporate Governance

This report relates to the Council complying with governance and procedural issues and therefore does not directly support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the Council Plan and the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.

6. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising out of this report.

7. Legal Aspects

7.1.

A working group is not a committee or sub-committee of the Council. A working group does not have delegated authority to make decisions.

7.2.

The Council has adopted the following principles in relation to Member/Officer working groups:

- The working group should be subject specific.
- The working group should have a short life, ideally no longer than six months.
- The relevant Corporate Director should report the findings of the working group to the service Committee, including a recommendation to disestablish the working group.
- Member/Officer Consultative Groups should be considered where the work of the group was expected to continue beyond six months.

8. Contact Officers

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